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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3623	

DATE MAILED: 09/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>17 June 2005</u>.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL.**   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-11,14-17,21-29 and 31-59</u> is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-11,14-17,21-29 and 31-59</u> is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>20050617</u>.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6)☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1.   The following is a non-final office action in response to communications received

06/17/2005. Claims 1, 6, 9, 14, 17, 21-23, 26, 28, 31, 33, 36, 40, 42, 45, 48, 51, 55, and 58 have

been amended. Claims 1-11, 14-17, 21-29, and 31-59 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the

basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United
> States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who
> has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention
> thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999

(AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002

do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an

international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the

reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA

35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

3.   Claims 1-8, 11, 14-17, 21-29, 31-32, 40-45, 47, and 55-58 are rejected under 35

U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Epinions.com. This is a rejection over the services made

available through the website Epinions.com. The following publications are used to support the

rejection set forth below:

        Various archived web pages of Epinions.com acquired from webarchive.org

(WayBackMachine) ranging from Nov. 27, 1999 to Jan. 22, 2000 on pages 1-18 and 21-28.

Nick Patience in "Epinions Launches Online Shopping Guide Built on Trust" from Sept.

1, 1999 on pages 19-20.

4.   As per claim 1, Epinions.com teaches a method comprising:

associating one or more characteristic values with each user of a plurality of users of an

online trading community, the one or more characteristic values representing an individual rating

associated with each user (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic

value is maintained for each user, a user being rated as very useful or useful. The web tool

trades services in a community); and

deriving a community rating uniquely corresponding to a particular user by utilizing an

aggregation of the one or more characteristic values associated with the particular user and the

one or more characteristic values associated with each user of the plurality of users brought in to

the online trading community by the particular user (See at least pages 9 and 10, wherein a

community rating is derived using the web of trust and reviews of the user's opinion by

community members. The community ratings uniquely correspond to the user and use one or

more rating values associated with the user. For example, a community rating is seen on the

bottom of page 10, where the 11/22/99 review of Bonies7 is considered very useful by the

community. See at least pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust

shows her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure and

presents the community ratings based on the combinations of the users linked with Bonies7).

5.   As per claim 2, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the online trading community

comprises an electronic community to trade merchandise over a network, wherein the trading of

the merchandise comprises at least one of buying or selling of goods or services (See at least pages 1, 6, and 9-11, wherein the electronic community is a community that trades the merchandise of services over the network).

6. As per claim 3, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the network comprises the Internet (See pages 1 and 19, wherein epinions.com is a internet based tool).

7. As per claim 4, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the one or more characteristic values comprise a feedback value based on feedback concerning the particular user received from other users of the plurality of users in the electronic community (See pages 9-13 and 19, paragraphs 1-3, wherein each customer can rate and share recommendations and users rate the reviewers and their reviews).

8. As per claim 5, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the other users of the plurality of users comprise users that have previously traded with the particular user (See at least pages 9-13 and page 19, sections 1-3, wherein the feedback is written by customers who have traded services with the user previously, wherein the user is rated as very useful, useful, etc. See page 9, which lists the plurality of users that "trust" the user).

9. As per claim 6, Epinions.com teaches a method further comprising maintaining a relationship tree between each user of the plurality of users, the relationship tree includes sponsorships between the particular user and any users of the plurality of users that were brought in by the particular user (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that back the opinion of the specific user).

10.   As per claim 7, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the sponsorship relationships of

the plurality of users are represented as a relationship tree including one or more n-ary trees (See

at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other

users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that back the opinion of the

specific user. So if Bonies7 is trusted by a hypothetical Joe and Joe is trusted by a hypothetical

Sarah, that is a n-ary web or tree of trust).

11.   As per claim 8, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein information concerning the

sponsorship relationships between the plurality of users is stored in a data structure for each user

of the plurality of users (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows

her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that

back the opinion of the specific user. Furthermore, see page 6 which discusses sponsorship of

members).

12.   As per claim 11, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein the community rating and the

one or more characteristic values comprise one or more of the following: alphabetic values,

numeric values, alpha-numeric values, symbolic values, and graphic values (See pages 2-5, 9-11,

and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic value is maintained for each user).

13.   Claims 14, 15, 16, and 17 recite equivalent limitations to claims 1, 2, 4, and 6,

respectively, and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale applied above.

14.   As per claim 21, Epinions.com teaches wherein the community rating for the particular

user represent a reputation value corresponding to the particular user (See pages 9-11, wherein

the user rating represents a reputation value of the user as useful, very useful, etc.).

15.   As per claim 22, Epinions.com teaches a method comprising:

associating a first characteristic value with a first user of a plurality of users within an

online trading community, the first characteristic value being obtained for the first user utilizing

a first feedback value based on feedback received concerning the first user from other users of

the plurality of users (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein the web tool allows

members to trade services and a characteristic value is maintained for each user, a user being

rated as very useful or useful, etc.. See pages 9-13 and 19, paragraphs 1-3, wherein each

customer can rate and share recommendations and users rate the reviewers and their reviews);

associating a second characteristic value with a second user of a plurality of users,

wherein the second user is brought in to the online trading community by the first user, the

second characteristic value being obtained for the second user utilizing a second feedback value

based on feedback received concerning the second user from other users of the plurality of users

(See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic value is maintained for each

user, a user being rated as very useful or useful, etc.. See pages 9-13 and 19, paragraphs 1-3,

wherein each customer can rate and share recommendations and users rate the reviewers and

their reviews. The system maintains a relationship structure of users that back the opinion of

each user. Furthermore, see page 6 which discusses sponsorship of members); and

deriving a first community rating for the first user by utilizing an aggregation of the first

characteristic value and the second characteristic value (See page 8, wherein a first community

user is deemed an expert by the quality and quantity of his/her reviews as well as the rating

he/she gives other members. See also pages 2-5, 9-13, and 19, wherein the web of trust shows

who the user trusts (or backs) and who trusts (or backs) him/her. Therefore, the community

rating is made up of the relationship of the user to other users in the community and his/her rating).

16.   As per claim 23, Epinions.com teaches a method further comprising:

associating a third characteristic value with a third user of the plurality of users, wherein the third user is brought in to the online trading community by the second user, the third characteristic value is obtained for the third user by utilizing a third feedback value based on feedback received concerning the third user from other users of the plurality of users (See page 8, wherein a community user is deemed an expert by the quality and quantity of his/her reviews as well as the rating he/she gives other members. See pages 2-5, 9-13, 19, and 24, wherein a third value is associated with a third user (the third user "backed" by the second), the third value based on feedback about the user); and

deriving a second community rating for the second user by utilizing an aggregation of the second characteristic value and the third characteristic value (See at least pages 9, 10, and 24, wherein a community rating is derived using the web of trust and reviews of the user's opinion by community members. The community ratings uniquely correspond to the user and use one or more rating values associated with the user. For example, a community rating is seen on the bottom of page 10, where the 11/22/99 review of Bonies7 is considered very useful by the community. The web of trust shows whom the user trusts (or backs) and who trusts (or backs) him/her. Therefore, the community rating is made up of the relationship of the user to other users in the community and his/her rating).

17.   As per claim 24, Epinions.com teaches maintaining a relationship tree between the first user and the second user of the plurality of users, wherein the relationship tree comprises a

sponsorship relationship having the second user as a lineal descendent of the first user (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that back the opinion of the specific user. See also page 6 which discusses sponsorship of members).

18.   As per claim 25, Epinions.com discloses a method further comprising maintaining a relationship tree between the second user and the third user of the plurality of users, wherein the relationship tree comprises a sponsorship relationship having the third user as a lineal descendant of the second user (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that back the opinion of the specific user. See also page 6, which discusses sponsorship of members).

19.   As per claim 26, Epinions.com discloses wherein the relationship tree comprises a nexus between the first user, the second user, and other users brought in to by at least one of the first user and the second user (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of connected and linked users that back the opinion of the specific user. See also page 6 which discusses sponsorship of members).

20.   As per claim 27, Epinions.com discloses a method wherein the first community rating comprises a first reputation value corresponding to the first user, and the second community rating comprises a second reputation value corresponding to the second user (See at least pages 9-11, wherein the rating for the user represents a reputation value of the user as useful, very useful, etc. This is done for each member/user in the community).

21.   As per claim 28, Epinions.com teaches a machine-readable medium having stored

thereon data representing sets of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the

machine to:

associating a first characteristic value with a first user of a plurality of users within an

online trading community, the first characteristic value is obtained for the first user by utilizing a

first feedback value based on feedback received concerning the first user from other users of the

plurality of users (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic value is

maintained for each user, a user being rated as very useful or useful, etc.. See pages 9-13 and 19,

paragraphs 1-3, wherein each customer can rate and share recommendations and users rate the

reviewers and their reviews);

associating a second characteristic value with a second user of a plurality of users,

wherein the second user is brought in to the online trading community by the first user and the

second characteristic value is obtained for the second user by utilizing a second feedback value

based on feedback received concerning the second user from other users of the plurality of users

(See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic value is maintained for each

user, a user being rated as very useful or useful, etc.. See pages 9-13 and 19, paragraphs 1-3,

wherein each customer can rate and share recommendations and users rate the reviewers and

their reviews. The system maintains a relationship structure of users that back the opinion of

each user. Furthermore, see page 6 which discusses sponsorship of members); and

deriving a first community rating for the first user by utilizing an aggregation of the first

characteristic value and the second characteristic value (See page 8, wherein a first community

user is deemed an expert by the quality and quantity of his/her reviews as well as the rating

he/she gives other members. See also pages 2-5, 9-13, and 19, wherein the web of trust shows

who the user trusts (or backs) and who trusts (or backs) him/her. Therefore, the community

rating is made up of the relationship of the user to other users in the community and his/her

rating);

22.   Claims 29, 31-32, 40, and 41 recite equivalent limitations to claims 24, 26-27, 23, and 25,

respectively, and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale applied above.

23.   As per claim 42, Epinions.com teaches a method, comprising:

        associating one or more characteristic values with each user of a plurality of users of an

online trading community, the one or more characteristic values representing an individual rating

associated with each user (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic

value is maintained for each user, a user being rated as very useful or useful. The web tool

trades services in a community); and

        determining a community rating uniquely corresponding to a particular user by

utilizing (1) one or more characteristic values associated with the particular user (See at least

pages 9 and 10, wherein a community rating is derived using the web of trust and reviews of the

user's opinion by community members. The community ratings uniquely correspond to the user

and use one or more rating values associated with the user).

24.   As per claim 43, teaches associating the community rating to the particular user (See at

least pages 9 and 10, wherein a community rating uniquely corresponds to the user).

25.   Claims 44, 45, 47, 55, 56, 57, and 58 recite equivalent limitations to claims 2, 6, 11, 42,

43, 2, and 6, respectively, and are rejected using the same art and rationale applied above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

26.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in
> section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are
> such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person
> having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the
> manner in which the invention was made.

27.   Claims 33-39, 48-51, and 53-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Epinions.com. Applicant is reminded that this is a rejection over the services

made available through the website, Epinions.com, as discussed above.

28.   As per claims 33 and 34, Epinions.com teaches a system, comprising:

as per claim 33, computers that interact over a network such as the internet (See pages 1

and 19, wherein epinions.com is a internet based tool);

maintaining profile/account information of the users as well as the ratings of the opinions

and users (See pages 3, 5, 6-7, 10, and 21-28, which discusses the maintenance of a profile and

the displaying of past ratings);

a first computer to associate one or more characteristic values with each user of a

plurality of users of an online trading community, the one or more characteristic values

representing an individual rating associated with each user, and to derive a community rating

uniquely corresponding to a particular user by utilizing an aggregation of the one or more

characteristic values associated with the particular user and the one or more characteristic values

associated with each user of the plurality of users brought in to the online trading community by

the particular user (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19, paragraph 3, wherein user rates other users using

the online interface and a characteristic value is maintained for each user, a user being rated as

very useful or useful. See at least pages 9 and 10, wherein a community rating is derived using

the web of trust and reviews of the user's opinion by community members. The community

ratings uniquely correspond to the user and use one or more rating values associated with the

user. For example, a community rating is seen on the bottom of page 10, where the 11/22/99

review of Bonies7 is considered very useful by the community. See at least pages 2-5, 9-11, and

19, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her relationship with other users. The

system maintains this relationship structure and presents the community ratings based on the

combinations of the users linked with Bonies7).

As per claim 34, computers that interact over a network such as the internet (See pages 1

and 19, wherein epinions.com is a internet based tool);

maintaining profile/account information of the users as well as the ratings of the opinions

and users (See pages 3, 5, 6-7, 10, and 21-28, which discusses the maintenance of a profile and

the displaying of past ratings); and

a computer to receive feedback concerning the particular user from other users of the

plurality of users, generate a feedback value corresponding to the particular user based on the

feedback, and transmit the feedback value to the first computer (See pages 2-5, 9-11, and 19,

paragraph 3, wherein a characteristic value is maintained for each user, a user being rated as very

useful or useful, etc. by other users of the systems. See pages 9-13 and 19, paragraphs 1-3,

wherein users can share opinions, rate the opinions of others users, and view the opinions of

others via the network tool and his/her computer).

However, Epinions.com does not expressly disclose a first storage medium or a first

computer coupled with the first storage medium (as per claim 33) or a second storage medium or

a second computer coupled with the second storage medium and first computer via a network

interface (as per claim 34).

Epinions.com teaches an Internet based tool that allows users to maintain a

profile/account as well as see the current and past reviews of products and reviewers. It is old

and well known to use a storage medium associated with a computer in order to store

information, such as account and activity information, in an efficient and reliable manner. It is

also old and well known that a network contains multiple connected computers. Therefore it

would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use a

storage medium coupled to a second computer and a first computer in the networked system of

Epinions.com in order to allow for the more efficient storage and retrieve of all the information

of the tool by all users of the system. When multiple users use a website such as Epinions.com,

it is old and well known that it is efficient to allow each user to use his/her computer and to use

storage mediums to store the information of the system and the profile information of the users.

29.   As per claim 35, Epinions.com discloses computers that interact over a network such as

the Internet (See pages 1 and 19, wherein epinions.com is a internet based tool. However,

Epinions.com does not expressly disclose that a first computer comprises a server computer and

the second computer that comprises a client computer.

Epinions.com discloses a network-based tool through which a user can receive and post

opinion information, such as ratings. Using a remote computer to view information on the

Internet that is received from a second computer that is a server is old and well known in the web

and e-commerce arts. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at

the time of the invention to use the network framework of a second client viewing computer and

a first server computer in the network-based tool of Epinions.com in order to more efficiently

allow remote users of the system to send and receive information.

30.   Claims 36, 37, 38, and 39 recite equivalent limitations to claims 17, 4, 2, and 3,

respectively, and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as applied above.

31.   Claims 48-51, 53, and 54 recite equivalent limitations to claims 33-36, 11, and 2,

respectively, and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale applied above.

32.   Claims 9-10, 46, 52, and 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable

over Epinions.com in view of Aho et al. (_Data Structures and Algorithms_).

33.   As per claim 9, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein information concerning the

relationships between the plurality of users is stored in a data structure for each user of the

plurality of users (See at least page 9, wherein, for example, Bonies7 web of trust shows her

relationship with other users. The system maintains this relationship structure of users that back

the opinion of the specific user. Furthermore, see page 6 that discusses sponsorship of

members). However, Epinions.com does not expressly disclose that the data structure for the

particular user contains a pointer to the at least one user of the plurality of users that was

sponsored by the particular user.

Aho et al. teaches a data structure that contains a pointer to the at least one member of a

plurality of members (See at least page 87 and figure 3.12, in which the data structure contains a

pointer which shows the relationship).

Both Epinions.com and Aho et al. disclose structured relationships of members. It is old

and well known in the art to use pointers to show the relationship between entities. For example,

in Aho et al.'s book "Data Structures and Algorithms" the use of pointers is shown in figure 3.12

in the data structure to show the relationship between the users (see page 87). Therefore, it

would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use

pointers in the data structures in order to allow one to quickly and accurately determine a users

sponsorship and others in their web of trust.

34.   As per claim 10, Epinions.com teaches a method wherein one or more community ratings

for the particular user is derived (See at least pages 9 and 10). However, Epinions.com does not

expressly disclose that the one or more community ratings is derived utilizing a recursive

routine.

Aho et al. discloses using recursive routines in data structures (See page 76).

Recursive routines are old and well known as efficient ways to manipulate the values of

structured data. The reviews of Epinions.com are associated in a web of trust, which is a data

structure linking members and members rating in a structured manner to derive overall reviews

for a user. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

the invention to use a recursive routine when deriving one or more community rating for a user

in order to more efficiently program and manipulate the information stored about the user ratings

in the web of trust.

35.   Claims 46, 52, and 59 recite equivalent limitations to claim 10 and are therefore rejected

using the same art and rationale applied above.

Response to Arguments

36.   Applicant's arguments with regards to the rejections based on Epinions.com have been

fully considered, but they are not persuasive. In the remarks, Applicant argues that

Epinions.com does not teach or suggest (1) utilizing an aggregation of the one or more

characteristic values associated with the particular user and the one or more characteristic values

associated with each user of the plurality of users sponsored to the online trading community by

the particular user.

In response to argument (1) of the Applicant, Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Epinions.com teaches that a rating is derived for a specific user by combining a value/values

associated with the user and a value/values associated with other users brought in to the web of

trust by the user. Examiner points out that there is no specific recitation in the claims as to how

the deriving or aggregating occurs, what the characteristic values identify, what being "brought

in to the community" functionally entails, etc. Epinions.com obtains at least one rating for the

particular user based on the responses of the community to that specific user, the responses of the

specific user to other members of the community, and the specific user's interaction with the

community. A web of trust is established that shows the community members who trust the

specific user (such as shown on page 9) as well as one or more values of quality expressed by

other users of the system. A rating that represents the community's overall opinion towards a the

particular user is derived, as shown for example on the bottom of page 10, where the 11/22/99

review of Bonies7 is considered very useful by the community. The system also combines into

the rating if the specific user is considered an expert by using the opinion of the specific user (the

quality and quantity of the particular user's opinions), the particular user's rating (backing) of

other users' reviews, and the other users' reviews of the particular user's ratings. See also page

24.

Examiner notes that she agrees with applicant that Epinions.com does not specifically

teach a user recruiting and functionally causing another user to visit and join the community (an

example of functionally causing another user to join the community would be, for example,

giving other users passcodes to the community). However, Examiner points out that there is no

specific recitation in the claims as to what being "brought in to the community" functionally

entails. As discussed in the interview, Examiner suggests bring such functional language into the

claims. However, as the claims are written, a user "backing" another user is sufficient to meet the

recitation of being "brought in to the online community by the first user". As discussed in the

interview, Examiner suggests bring such functional language into the claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Beth Van Doren whose telephone number is (571) 272-6737.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

end
bvd
September 3, 2005

Susanne Diaz
Susanne Diaz
Primary Examiner
AU 3623